



Milwaukee County Office of the Sheriff

NEWS RELEASE

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David A. Clarke Jr.
Sheriff

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Dear Concerned Citizens:

On January 12, 2007, a car struck and critically injured Milwaukee County Sheriff's Deputy Timothy Johnson. Deputy Johnson was clearing an accident scene in the Stadium Interchange near eastbound I-94 and U.S. Highway 41. Milwaukee County Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. delivered the following remarks to the media shortly after the incident.

Good Afternoon. We've talked about this issue before and the public needs to understand how dangerous an environment the side of an American Interstate is. The weight of the vehicles operating on the freeways, the speeds at which they are traveling, and the close proximity with which law enforcement must interact with that traffic creates a critically hazardous environment.

At 6:21 this morning, squads were clearing an accident scene. The deputy was outside of his squad. Emergency lights were in operation making the scene clearly visible to on coming motorists. Traffic started to slow down. A Chevy Cobalt driven by a 25-year-old Milwaukee woman suddenly stopped. She lost control of her car while trying to avoid a rear-end collision. Her car spun out of control and struck 27-year-old Deputy Tim Johnson sending him airborne. He was thrown into the cement median striking his head.

Deputy Johnson is currently at Froedtert Hospital and according to the doctor that I talked to, he is in very, very, critical condition. He has serious head trauma along with other injuries. The head injury is obviously of most concern. His family is at the hospital including his wife. He has two children under the age of three. The driver of the striking vehicle is seven months pregnant and according to the report I have right now, her pregnancy is not in danger.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been talking about this since I became Sheriff. We've been talking about the need for motorists to use extreme caution around our patrol deputies. This is the 3rd deputy struck already in 2007. Obviously, this is the most serious.

Traffic accidents are the leading cause of death for law enforcement officer. 41 percent of all officers killed in the line of duty were traffic-related. This was a case of everybody being in such a hurry that they do not allow a safe stopping distance. Throw in the fact that the pavement was wet and it was dark. It takes a car -- especially one

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traveling at freeway speed an even longer distance to stop. No one wants to hit a law enforcement officer performing their duty but they are not driving like it.

Once a vehicle spins out of control, it's like a bullet. The driver has no control and the vehicle will hit whatever it wants until it stops.

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